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The Role of Internet on the Performance of Employees in India

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Abstract

It is the Globalization which has helped all countries to come nearer to each other. Internet, computers and smartphones have played very significant role in that. India is the third largest smartphone based country in the world. According to the survey of the Times of India, the total number of active mobile subscriptions in India is more than 886 million in July 2014. And among them there are more than 349 million are smartphone users. 95% smartphone users use their phones to get local information, 54% users have made purchase via their phones. From these statistics, it can be seen that internet use and digital media have made vital impact on personal and professional lives of people. In organizations, internet have influenced various sectors such as advertising, marketing, purchasing, comparison with other products, as an easy way of communication and it has also affected negatively such as, cyber addiction, cyber-relationship addiction, information overload, etc. This paper reviews various research studies and reports about pros and cons about the influence of internet on the performance of employees in India.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Internet Use, Cyber Addiction.

Introduction

Organizations are increasingly using Internet as a tool for meeting their business needs. As a result, Internet access for office workers has become commonplace. Despite its myriad use, a pervasive problem associated with Internet use by employees is its potential for abuse. In this research, "Internet abuse" refers to employees' use of Internet for non-work-related purpose. Although some researchers have considered non-work-related Internet use as a form of self-directed, experiential learning (Belanger and Van Slyke, 2000), its consequences, such as bandwidth waste and legal liability cannot be ignored. More importantly, Internet abuse has exposed organizations' information systems (IS) to a host of new security threats that put organizations at risk. The CSI/FBI 2003 survey report showed that Internet connection is increasingly cited as a frequent point of attack (78%) and, among others, virus (82%) is the most cited form of attack.

Recent literature on Internet abuse has focused on identifying technical measures, modifying user behaviour (McBride, 2000), proposing Internet use policy (Siau, Nah and Teng, 2002), educating user (Case and Young, 2002), understanding the role of moral dimensions (Lee, Lee and Kim, 2003) and identifying antecedents (Galletta and Polak, 2003).

Our study contributes to this growing body of knowledge by examining Internet abuse in the workplace from a sociological and psychological perspective using Triandis' Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour (TIB). In the context of Internet abuse, it is important to consider habit because Internet abuse is a "continuing" behaviour. When a particular behaviour repeatedly occurs, the influence of habit increases while that of behavioural intention decreases (Triandis, 1980).

Theoretical Background

Previous studies had applied Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to investigate antecedents of Internet abuse (e.g. Lee et al., 2003; Galletta & Polak, 2003). In this study, we employ the TIB which is a part of the Triandis Model of Subjective Culture and Social Behaviour (Triandis, 1980). Although TPB has been widely used for understanding a variety of unethical human behaviours (e.g. Chang, 1998; Leonard and Cronan, 2001) and several meta-analyses have supported its strong predictive power (e.g. Sutton, 1998), we consider TIB to be more comprehensive than TPB in that it contains all components of TPB and includes two additional aspects: *habit* and *affect*. In particular, researchers (e.g. Bamberg and Schmidt, 2003) have found that the inclusion of habit increases the predictive power of TIB over TPB. Hence, we expect TIB to perform better than TPB in explaining and predicting Internet abuse.

Internet for Employees/Workers: Both Risks and Opportunities

Technology, especially the use of internet has been reshaping the labour force since the Industrial Revolution and continues to do so at an accelerated rate. Disruptive technologies, like automation of knowledge work, have sobering implications for many of the world's workers, since an increasing array of tasks involving human-like judgment can be automated. Employees in clerical functions and routine customer service will need to adapt and learn the skills to carry out higher-value tasks. Experts now believe that even work that requires specialised knowledge, such as legal and professional services (accounting, for example), could be automated as the intelligence of computing machines advances. Employees who are displaced can find other types of work; in the past, technology advances have created new types of jobs as others were made obsolete. However, if Employees do not attain new skills, the benefits of higher productivity could be concentrated among the most educated members of the labour force, leaving behind the less skilled.

Our global research suggests that applications such as automatic language translation and intelligent customer-service applications that can parse and answer customer questions could generate a 40 to 50 percent productivity gain in knowledge work. That would be equivalent to the output of 110 million to 140 million full-time employees around the world in 2025. However, recent MGI research in China indicates that despite the changes that will occur due to rapidly proliferating Internet technologies, the net impact from Internet applications on the total number of jobs could be neutral to slightly positive. The research estimates that ten million to thirty one million jobs (or about 1 to 4 percent of China's total labour force) could be eliminated between 2013 and 2025, while up to 46 million jobs could be created because of new market opportunities and expanded services enabled by Internet technologies (assuming workers have the skills to do the more value-added work). Applying estimates from our global research suggests that the proliferation of systems using automation of knowledge work technologies could drive productivity equivalent to the output of some six million to eight million knowledge workers in 2025, ranging from clerical and customer service staff to business process outsourcing and IT workers. 25 Efficiency improvements will affect jobs in manufacturing, construction, trade, and transport sectors, too. Implementing digital applications, such as e-commerce, and automated supply chains, retail, and assembly lines, could yield potential savings equivalent to the output of an additional nine million to 17 million jobs in these sectors by 2025. In all, 5 to 8 percent of India's total labour force in 2025, or 19 million to 29 million workers in non-farm jobs, could be negatively affected by technology and may need to redefine their work.

In recent years, abuse of company's Internet resources by employees has received a considerable amount of attention among organisational scholars. The term cyber slacking or cyber loafing has been used to describe voluntary acts of employees using their companies' Internet access for non-work-related purposes during working hours (Lim, 2002). Scholars generally conceptualised cyber loafing as a form of workplace production deviance (e.g. Lim 2002, Lim and Teo 2005). This is because these cyber activities (browsing and emailing) which are conducted at the workplace during work time constitute an unproductive use of time and detract employees from completing their work demands. Earlier studies consistently suggested that cyber loafing is prevalent and is a perennial cause of concern for many companies (Lim et al. 2002).

A survey conducted in 2005 by WebSense.com (www.websense.com), an Internet monitoring company, revealed that *61% of American employees engaged in cyber loafing of some form. More recently, the Web@Work survey conducted by Websense.com in 2006 found that the average American employee spent about 24% of his working hours on cyber loafing activities. This puts the average amount of time spent on non-work related Internet activities at *10 h per employee per week. Anecdotal evidence from Fox (2007) suggested that some employees spent as many as 5–6 h a day surfing the Internet at work. The approximate number of American employees who do cyber loafing at work stood at 34 million, leading to productivity time lost totalling *200.6 million hours per week (Debt Cubed 2006). Similarly, anecdotal evidence showed that employees in United Kingdom spent about 40% of their time cyber loafing (Amble 2004) and this cost UK businesses about £154 million a year.

As per the report of 'The Hindu', Myhiring.com had surveyed in 2011 that 59 percent on Indian employees were using Internet for completing personal work at workplace. The survey showed that 32 percent of employees were spending 12 to 14 hours per week for doing online share trading during working hours. Notably, 83 percent of hiring managers surveyed said using Internet at work for nonwork related activities spoil the relation between employees and employers.

Although companies are concerned with employees' productivity loss associated with cyber loafing activities, some scholars have noted that cyber loafing can serve as a palliative coping strategy against negative workplace experiences such as stress (e.g. Stanton, 2002, Oravec 2002, 2004, Anandarajan and Simmers 2005). This is especially important as employees today are keeping longer hours at work and are likely to suffer negative effects of stress and burnout (Maslach and Leiter 1997). Thus, it is imperative for scholars to examine how and when cyber loafing can have a positive effect on work so that its potential benefits can be harnessed.

Indian scenario of use of Mobile Internet

The revolutionary success of India's mobile industry is well known. What is not as well articulated is how the mobile ecosystem is driving Internet penetration in India. The following facts present a glimpse of that phenomenon:

1. India has more than 160 million Internet users, of which 86 million access Internet using their mobile devices.
2. In the last 3-4 years, the number of users who access the Internet through a 3G connection has

grown to round 22 million, to put things in perspective, compare this with the 15 million fixed line broadband connections accrued over the last 17 years.

3. There are over 36 million Smartphone users as against c. 60 million PC users 9% of overall Internet page views in India come from mobile devices Over 40% of searches on Google originate from mobile device 30% of Facebook users in India are mobile-only Internet users and 30% of new registrations are coming through mobile LinkedIn ranks India among its top 4 growth markets for mobile usage.

While e-commerce and digital advertising are acknowledged to have attained a certain critical mass in India, mobile Internet is yet to break into public consciousness. Mobile Internet based businesses have not scaled to levels where belief in the ability to monetize through the channel is established. Several models are still in the trial stage, but there are enough leading indicators to prove we may be on the cusp of a very exciting phenomenon.

Advantages of Internet in the Workplace

Improves Communication

Many businesses are using various business communication technologies through to change the way their employees interact and communicate while at work. Employees can use various communication tools to interact or exchange information at work. For example, employees from different departments in a company can use text messaging services or video conferencing tools like Skype to share and exchange information. Virtual communication tools like Skype can be used to share screens and this can help workers to share projects while in different departments and among the world, the same application can be used to support group decision making. Also communication technologies can be used in the customer service department to serve customers on time.

Encourages Innovation and Creativity

Workers can use different business technologies to create innovative business ideas which can be used in business growth and expansion. Many companies create technological challenges and reward employees who come up with creative ideas using internet. Employees can use internet technology to innovate ways of promoting a business online. Social enterprise networks like Yammer.com can be used by employees to socialize and interact with other creative employees from different organizations, this interaction will result into information exchange and it also encourages brain storming on various work related issues.

Improves on Human Resource Management

Internet at the workplace can change the way human resource managers do their job. It improves on the process of screening, recruiting and hiring new employees. Many human resource managers are using internet to advertise job openings. Targeted candidates will be in position to apply for these positions online by submitting their resumes to the human resource manager. The all process saves time and it makes the human resource managers work easier. Internet can also be used to track performance and productivity of each employee at work. Once employees are aware that they are being monitored, their productivity will increase.

Saves Time

Internet can be used to automate various tasks at work; this automation will guarantee efficiency and will also increase on production at work. The use of computers to accomplish specific tasks at work creates room of making corrections on instant and it also reduces on human errors. Using databases to capture and store information can facilitate quick decision making at work. Employees can easily access business information via one single database; this information can be edited and saved for later use. Use of internal networks at the workplace can help in sharing of gadgets like printers and scanners, so employees do not have to move to different departments to share technological tools.

Creates Mobility

The use of internet and computers to work has eliminated space and time boundaries. Employees can work from anywhere at any time, this mobility makes employees stay in control of their jobs. With the use of internet, organizations can do virtual meetings which save time and they don't have to be in meeting physically yet information and data will be shared in real time.

Disadvantages of Technology in the Workplace

Causes Distraction at Work

Their so many ways internet can distract employees at work. The use of social networks at work can cause so much distraction and it affects the productivity of employees. Some companies have decided to block access to specific websites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, because of the unlimited distraction they cause. Other business technologies which cause distraction at work include smartphones, computers and virtual meeting applications like Skype.

High Maintenance Costs

It is expensive to buy internet access for whole organization, and it is also costly to maintain it. Many small businesses can not afford the cost of hiring a full-time technical person, so they resort to monthly tech contractors who charge them for work done. If business internet tools like computers are not well maintained, their performance will decrease and the process of buying new computers or any other business technology can even be more expensive.

Makes Employees Lazy

Since most tasks are automated by technology, many employees become lazy at work, internet kills their creativity and skills. Simple tasks like calculating sales and tracking inventory are being done with computers, so you will find that employees do not put their brains at work, they can't solve high-end business problems because a computer or software will do it with no challenge.

Affects Workplace Relationships

Employees communicate via cell phones, text messages, email or virtual video conferencing tools. This type of communication technology eliminates face-to-face communication. Interpersonal communications are important in building workplace relationships because employees will get a chance to know each other in person, sometimes they can even share non-work related information, this type of

interaction is killed by communication technology tools. Employees become more reserved and self-centred; they get buried into their work which can be of great harm to a business.

Major Risk Factors

Though we like the advantages that come with technology at work, it also tends to be risky, especially when it comes to data security. All employees in important decision making positions will need access to private business information; this can pose as a threat, because it can be very difficult to monitor the usage and privacy of this information. Many employees come with flash drives at work, so they can transfer critical business information and use it for their own personal gains.

Phubbing

Phubbing refers to an individual using their mobile electronic device either sporadically or continuously when they are in the company of others. Given society's obsession with Facebook, Twitter, My space, texting, emailing and instant responding, it's no wonder this process has been given a name all of its own.

Over time, obsessions with checking the phone can become addictive, and act as substitutes for intimate relationships, whether romantic or even reducing enjoyment derived from face to face discourse over coffee with friends. A discourse is a social bond, and such important bonds become reduced significantly when a screen literally comes to stand in its place.

Phubbing is really common when we find the company of others boring or irritating. When individuals are acting in a self-absorbed manner, it can be very hard to remain present and connected because they are not acknowledging you as a person. Therefore some people resort to Phubbing to alleviate feelings of boredom and to actually enhance their self-esteem by reminding themselves that they DO exist (and they have got the updated Facebook comment to prove it).

Cyber Loafing

Cyber loafing (also called cyber slacking) is employees' non-work related use of company provided email and the Internet while working (Lim, 2002). Some of this cyber loafing can be considered rather innocuous, especially if limited in duration (e.g., sending and receiving a personal email or checking headlines at CNN.com). Other types of cyber loafing, however, are considered more of a problem either because they are more time consuming and thus reduce productivity (e.g., online shopping), they are inappropriate behaviour at work (e.g., online gambling), or because they are expose organizations to legal liabilities (e.g., downloading music).

As access to the Internet has become more common for employees, so has their propensity to use the Internet for entertainment and other non-work purposes on the job. In 2000, 56% of employees were using the Internet for personal reasons (Greengard, 2002). By 2003, 59% of Internet use at work was non-work related (Griffiths, 2003). Cyber loafing had become the most common way that employees waste time at work (Malachowski, 2005). Employees are also increasing the amount of time they spend cyber loafing. Current estimates range from a little over 3 h per week (Greenfield & Davis, 2002) to 2.5 h per day (Mills, Hu, Beldona, & Clay, 2001).

Although research on cyber loafing has been increasing, it has generally been descriptive (Lim, 2002) and often fails to differentiate among the types of cyber loafing, especially with regards to Internet use. We address this issue by arguing that there are different forms of cyber loafing and that these different forms have different antecedents. We feel that understanding the different forms of cyber loafing and their causes is important so that organizations can develop appropriate cyber loafing policies and sanctions. For example, policies may focus primarily on illegal activities (e.g., downloading music) which occur infrequently, but may not address more frequent forms of cyber loafing that are potentially more detrimental to employee productivity and computer resources (e.g., forwarding chain emails). Additionally, like other forms of inappropriate workplace behaviour, there are likely to be different causes for the different forms of cyber loafing (see Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Policies and sanctions should therefore be appropriately designed.

Explanations of Cyber Loafing

Although identifying the types of cyber loafing in which employees engage in is important, it is only a first step. We also seek to understand the differences in why people engage in the different forms of cyber loafing. We believe that these differences are linked to an important conceptual distinction between employees who engage in minor cyber loafing and those who engage in the serious cyber loafing. That is, employees who engage in minor cyber loafing do not believe that they are engaging in inappropriate or deviant behaviour whereas employees who engage in serious cyber loafing realize it is deviant and not likely to be condoned at work. Deviant behaviour can be defined as behaviour that departs from the norms of a reference group (Warren, 2003). Indeed, many of the researchers who discuss organizational policy related to cyber loafing imply that cyber loafing is a deviant work behaviour because it violates company norms (cf., Mills et al., 2001; Mirchandani & Motwani, 2003; Siau et al., 2002). We argue that this approach is appropriate, but only for serious cyber loafing. Conversely, we propose that employees engaged in minor cyber loafing do not see it as deviant behaviour at work. Instead, employees may see minor cyber loafing such as sending and receiving personal email as similar to making and taking personal phone calls at work, a behaviour Robinson and Bennett (1995) describe as minor, organizationally focused deviant behaviour. Taking personal phone calls at work is generally acceptable, although not always officially condoned, and usually falls within the norms of acceptable behaviour.

Research on organizational socialization suggests that employees' norms of appropriate behaviour come from their reference groups, primarily co-workers and supervisors (e.g., Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1993). Thus, employees who engage in minor cyber loafing are doing so in response to perceptions that others in the organization also regularly use some forms of email and the Internet for personal use. Early research supports this approach.

Lim and Teo (2005) report that employees justify their cyber loafing practices because ‘‘everybody else does it.’’ Lee, Lee, and Kim (2004) show that social influence from co-workers and supervisors was related to frequency of and time spent cyber loafing. Anandarajan and Simmers (2004) even demonstrate that supervisors' norms vary on the appropriateness of cyber loafing. Some managers are cyber-bureaucrats who feel that employees should never engage in personal use of the web at work while others are cyber-humanists who believe personal use of the web can help balance employees' lives. Clearly, cyber loafing is related to norms and norms vary. However, none of this previous research has examined the relationship of norms with the different types of cyber loafing.

Technology is being used in almost every company to accomplish specific tasks. Technology has changed the way we work and it has brought some fan at work, it reduces on human errors which can be caused by too much work or stress. Business technologies like computers**,** tablet**s,** social network**s,** virtual meeting software**,** accounting software, customer management applications, and so much more have removed workplace boundaries and they have also facilitated in the movement of information at the workplace which accelerates quick decision making at your workplace.

Using technology at your workplace has its own advantages and disadvantages. Below i have detailed points explaining how technology can be of great use at your workplace and how it can also be a problem.

Cyber Addiction

World is growing at a speedy rate, were use of computer and internet plays a major role. The internet can provide access to some valuable tools, informative content but when used in excess, the internet has the ability to interfere with work, life, relationships and daily routines and thus leads to cyber addiction. Cyber addiction is potentially dangerous condition that affects individuals who spend large amount of time online socializing with friends, playing games, gambling or just surfing the web despite the negative consequences that result from spending so much time online.

One study was conducted to study the pattern of internet across people of various professions who have access to it. The focus was to know the impact of internet use on their personal, social and occupational life. The result showed that the mean duration of daily internet use was 39.13 months. 50% of sample reported that internet use help them to overcome bad moods, 24% of sample was surfing during their lunch or dinner and 22.1% of sample reported that their physical activities were going down since they have started using internet. From this shocking result it can be said that the internet affects the users' life in multiple ways to prevent them a cautious approach should be adopted (Chen, Chen & Yang, 2008).

Some of the Ways by Which an Individual can Get Rid of Cyber Addiction

1. For the web-workers – get a visual assistance.
2. Set your computer usage boundaries early on.
3. Get your family and friends onside.
4. Give them the passwords.
5. Modify your routine.
6. Don't use the computer for recreational purposes.
7. Track your progress.

Get help for any mental health problems that may be contributing to your compulsive use of the internet.

If you suffer from depression, stress, anxiety or other mental health problems that are contributing to your desire to self-medication by using the internet, get help

Develop Coping Skills

If you use the internet as a way to cope with stress or to deal with other emotions, you'll need to develop coping skills in order to reduce your urges to use the internet.

1. Log your time - One way that you can reduce the amount of time that you spend online is to actually keep a log of the time that you do spend online.
2. Set a timer.
3. Substitute internet usage with healthy activities. Instead of going online, take a walk, read a book, call a friend or find another way to fill the time with a healthy activity.
4. Many different options for treatment exist to assist those who cannot cope with or overcome their internet addiction on their own.
5. If self-help for internet addiction doesn't work for you, consider these internet addiction treatment options.
6. Cognitive- behavioural therapy- providing methods of changing compulsive thoughts that result in poor behaviour into positive thoughts and reactions, cognitive-behavioural therapy can help to change the perceptions that you have regarding your internet use. This method of therapy is effective at reducing anxiety, eliminating stress or alleviating depression.
7. Support Groups- while there may not be as many support groups for those suffering from internet addiction as there are for those suffering from substance abuse or a gambling addiction, there are often alternatives, like social groups to whom people can contact.

Psychological Perspective

There are some researches done on Internet abuse, Internet addiction and cyber loafing based on some psychological theories which explain that these circumstances sometimes help employees to perform well in their work.

One study was done to synthesize theories from communication, psychology and criminology to examine the factors that influence the two most topics in industry i.e. internet abuse and addiction. It was found that personality factors such as locus of control and self-esteem significantly influence employees' internet addictions; and internet addiction significantly impacts employees' internet abuse. Thus, employers should pay special attention to employees' personalities because they play important roles in internet addiction and internet abuse and for that good internet policy will be useful too (Chen, Chen & Yang, 2008). Another research suggested that recently attention has shifted from identifying methods to limit

cyber loafing to pinpointing the cause of cyber loafing. This research showed that employees are more likely to cyber loaf when they are treated unfairly, have certain characteristics like external locus of control or higher work status, have positive attitudes toward cyber loafing, The authors also suggested that cyber loafing can possibly lead to positive outcomes like increased job performance, reduced stress, and work-life balance (Henle C A, & Kedharnath U, 2012).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the essay has argued that use of internet has brought advantages and disadvantages in all kinds of organizations. Companies can communicate effectively with their customers by internet. In addition, Companies now try to have a good relationship with their customers by using internet. What is more, companies now design a website to attractions people and provide products in it. As well as that, virtual communication is one of the important things in the business area. On the other hand, using internet in business has disadvantages that imbed the work. For instance, employees use the company computers for personal interests in the official working hours. Moreover, using internet for a long time in the work could affect health problems. These computers, smartphones, and internet are part of technology. Every human should know that technology is made for human, not humans are made for technology. So it is in our hand that how we are using technology.

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